

## Home Circle.

### "WHERE IS MOTHER?"

When a tired father returns at night from the office or the shop, when the children come home from school, the first question is always, unless she stands in the very hall before their eyes, "Where is mother?" It is often said that the mother is the home. This question is one of the many proofs of the truth of this proverb. Unless the mother is in the house, the vital principle of the home seems to be lacking. She comes, and comfort, love, and joy seem to enter with her. She goes, and there is a sort of breathless and uneasy waiting-time until she comes back again.

To the true mother, the knowledge that she is thus indispensable to the loved ones should be one of the choicest possessions. It is only by cherishing the spirit which prompts the question, "Where is mother?" that she can properly instill into the hearts of her children that "passion for homes" which one of our great writers has called the first characteristic of manly natures. And yet not infrequently a tired mother will exclaim impatiently: "I wish that I could stir without having an outcry, 'Where's mother?'" To one who sets true value upon life and its duties and pleasures, such words come with an awful shock. Pearls seem to have been cast wastefully before the feet of such a woman.

But even if a mother holds most dear this precious tribute of love, how many are there who take pains to be at home when the children come? Or, if she must be absent, to leave word for them, or to tell them before they go in the morning or at noon that she expects to be gone when they return, with the reasons and regrets? It is only by mutual thoughtfulness in those so-called trifles that the harmony of the home life can be preserved, and woe to her who does not appreciate them at their true value. It is impossible that the busy mother of a family, with shopping to do, calls to make, and meetings of various kinds to attend, should always be in when the children come home from school. It would show an undue regard for sentiment if she were to shut herself away from outside life which every woman needs so much, and which she needs especially for the benefit of her family. But by following this rule, to tell the children in the morning, whenever she can, just where she is to be, and how soon she will be at home, she may keep alive and still foster, though she is absent, the sacred flame which she so highly prizes.

A lady was calling recently upon a friend, when a small boy came bounding in at the basement door about four o'clock in the afternoon, with the usual inquiry: "Where is mother?" "O, I remember," he added, immediately, "she said she was going to the mother's meeting this afternoon. I wish she would hurry up and come back!"

"She didn't go," said the good-natured Irish girl to whom he had been speaking; "she had word there wouldn't be any meeting."

"O, goody!" cried the urchin, leaping up the stairs two at a time, and bursting into the room where the ladies were sitting. His face was wreathed in smiles—but his shoes were muddy.

"O, Tommy!" exclaimed his mother, in reproachful a voice, as she pointed to the tracks which he had left behind him.

"Well, I was so glad you were home," he explained, as he saluted her visitor in boyish fashion, and imprinted a resounding kiss upon his mother's cheek. I'm sorry about the mud, but here's my ball for you to sew up, and here's the Geography you were going to cover; and may I go over to Will Smith's corner with my roller-skates? There's such a daisy sidewalk over there!"

Verily, well may the mother forgive much in such a case. And blessed is she who can answer the children's question with a glad "Here I am!" and hear their sweet words of joy in her presence.—*The Congregationalist*.

### THESE ARE THE BOYS FOR CHRIST.

One day a gentleman saw two boys going along the streets of a large city. They were barefooted. Their clothes were ragged and dirty, and tied together by pieces of string. One of the boys was perfectly happy over a half-withered bunch of flowers which he had just picked up in the street. "I say, Billy," said he to his companion, "wasn't somebody real good to drop these flowers just where I could find them? and they are so pretty and sweet. Look sharp, Billy; maybe you'll find something by and by."

Presently the gentleman heard his merry voice again, saying, "O Billy, if here ain't half a pear, and it ain't much dirty, either! 'Cause you haven't found anything, you may bite first."

Billy was just going to take a very little taste of it, when his companion said, "Bite bigger, Billy; maybe we'll find another 'fore long."

What a noble heart that poor boy had, in spite of his rags and dirt.—*Temple Magazine*.

### A GOOD HOME.

A good home makes a good hope. Homesickness may be a sign of moral health. "When any one ceases to care for his home," says Spurgeon, "it is one of the worst possible signs of moral sickness." Perhaps there are few grown persons who cannot call to mind their attacks of homesickness when they were children. And perhaps, too, they can remember being laughed at and twitted for their involuntary exhibit of that sorest of soul maladies. A homesick boy ought to rejoice a parents heart—not because the parent ought to rejoice in a child's suffering, but because of the sign of moral sensibility which that suffering portends. A little boy, just four years old, had been sent to stay with a relative in the country to avoid contagion with a sick brother at home. But one morning, early, the little fellow arose, stole out of the house, and by a long road over the hills, through the woods, under the shadow of farm house, and out again beneath the open sky, the tiny feet, more used to the paved street than the country road, trudged homeward, reaching his father's door at breakfast time. That child might have endured a bruise or a burn manfully. He might have been petted and soothed for a flesh wound or a childish trouble. But how little does the world care for his worse malady of homesickness! Yet with what vigor did he flee its terrors! How sweet home looked to him long, long before his father's door loomed into sight! There is hope for the homesick boy. There is hope for the parent who will make home worth being sick for.—*Sunday-school Times*.

### HOW TO REMAIN YOUNG.

I have not been so surprised for a long while as I was during this week. I was talking with a gentleman, and the conversation turned upon life insurance. "Well," said he, "no company will take a risk on my life now." This appeared strange; for he looked hale and hearty, and about fifty years of age. I asked how that could be, and his reply was, "Because I am too old; you see I am over seventy!" I thought he was joking, and when he assured me that he was speaking in earnest I was dumbfounded. He looked so young and so strong, and yet he had passed the allotted three score years and ten. I asked if he was a temperance man. "Never tasted a drop of liquor in my life," he replied. That was the secret. Since writing this incident I have seen a young man, twenty-eight years of age, who looked over forty, and a broken-down wreck. He smoked cigarettes at ten, and was a drunkard at eighteen.—*Temple Magazine*.